

MARY HARTMAN  
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Episode #100

by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY. . . . .	LOUISE LASSER
TOM . . . . .	GREG MULLAVEY
LORETTA . . . . .	MARY KAY PLACE
MARTHA. . . . .	DODY GOODMAN
GEORGE. . . . .	PHIL BRUNS
CATHY . . . . .	DEBRALEE SCOTT
HEATHER . . . . .	CLAUDIA LAMB
BETTY McCULLOUGH. . . . .	VIVIAN BLAINE
HOWARD McCULLOUGH . . . . .	BEESON CARROLL
ED McCULLOUGH . . . . .	LARRY HADDON
MERLE JEETER. . . . .	DABNEY COLEMAN
JIMMY JOE JEETER. . . . .	SPARKY MARCUS
CLETE MEIZENHEIMER. . . . .	MICHAEL LEMBECK
NAOMI (HELPLINE LADY) . . . . .	

SETS

<u>ACT I</u>	<u>MARY'S KITCHEN, OVERLAPPING END OF</u>
(Pg. 1)	<u>ACT FOUR, #99</u>
	<u>LIMBO PHONE - HELP LINE</u>
	(Mary, Naomi, Heather)
 <u>ACT II</u>	 <u>McCULLOUGH DEN, LATER</u>
(Pg. 9)	(Tom, Ed, Betty, Howard)
 <u>ACT III</u>	 <u>SHUMWAY KITCHEN, MORNING</u>
(Pg. 15)	<u>LIMBO PHONE - CLETE MEIZENHEIMER</u>
	(Martha, George, Betty, Cathy,
	Clete)
 <u>ACT IV</u>	 <u>MOTEL ROOM, LATER</u>
(Pg. 22)	(Loretta, Merle, Jimmy Joe)

ACT ONE

MARY'S KITCHEN, OVERLAPPING END  
OF ACT FOUR, #99

MARY ASKING INFORMATION FOR THE  
HELPLINE NUMBER, THEN CALLING  
AND SAYING HELP! THEN TWO-WAY,  
A WOMAN (NAOMI) AT THE LIMBO  
HELPLINE PHONE DESK.

NAOMI

I beg your pardon?

MARY

I'm calling help.

NAOMI

Yes, this is the Helpline.

MARY

Good. Help!

NAOMI

I understand that part. But what do  
you want help with?

MARY

Oh... I see... well, my name's Mary --

NAOMI

First names only.

MARY

Good.

NAOMI

Now, what's your problem?

MARY

Actually, I don't know if I can talk about it.

NAOMI

Is it suicide?

MARY

Oh, no -- if I were going to kill myself, I wouldn't call the Helpline -- I'd just read a newspaper or something, 'til I cheered up.

NAOMI

You have a drug problem?

MARY

Oh, I'm off pills. I hardly even take aspirin anymore. The only habit I have is rubbing my teeth with my finger.

NAOMI

I beg your pardon?

MARY

(SHE DEMONSTRATES) Teeth. With finger.

NAOMI

How about acute acoholism?

MARY

You're really headed in the wrong direction.

NAOMI

Then why not give me a hint?



## MARY

Well, it's like this. My grandfather was arrested for indecent exposure, and the arresting officer was really cute, but, of course, I wasn't interested because I'm married. And have been for fourteen years. But this officer was very insistent. Not that I did anything, even though my husband was having an affair at the time with this incredibly tall payroll clerk and brought home a case of venereal disease. Or thought he did. The tests turned out to be negative. Anyway, to get this very attractive police officer away from my house, I introduced him to my grandfather's social worker -- but they didn't hit it off. Because the next thing I knew, I turned around and this very attractive police officer was engaged to my sister, Cathy, who had just been jilted by a deaf-mute poet, so, of course, she was very susceptible. But he was only doing it because of me, so naturally I had to break it up. Which made my husband suspicious, even though there was nothing going on. At that point. (BEAT) Well, almost nothing. The problem is that I began to see how incredibly strong his feelings were for me --

NAOMI

The police officer --

MARY

Right. And so we decided to make love. Just once. It was kind of blackmail so he wouldn't marry my sister. But it was also more than that. Only he had a heart attack and nothing happened.

NAOMI

(DISAPPOINTED) Oh, dear -- I'm so sorry.

MARY

Until he got to the hospital and I was visiting, you know, in the cardiac care unit? And we did it.

NAOMI

In the cardiac care unit?

MARY

Yes, of course, we tried to make it a beautiful moment, but the thing is my husband found out. And he just couldn't deal with it.

NAOMI

Well, I can imagine.

MARY

I mean, I have been to psychologists and ministers and magazines trying to find out what I can do to make up for it, but so far no one...



NAOMI

Has been able to help.

MARY

Exactly. I mean, I don't even know what kind of help I need or what I'd do with it if I got it...

NAOMI

Have you talked to a lawyer?

MARY

I beg your pardon?

NAOMI

Are you considering divorce?

MARY

Oh, no, of course not!

NAOMI

You know, you have a very nice telephone voice?

MARY

I beg your pardon?

NAOMI

I'm sorry, I don't know what made me say that. It just struck me. That and the fact that you sound so... tranquil... for someone on the borderline of hysteria.

MARY

Thank you. My saving grace is that I have always had this ability to communicate ... especially on the telephone.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Which is probably why I called information to get this number. And I'm really glad I did, because I really think it's helped me relax. It's so nice to know there are people you can call who are concerned, no matter what their motives are.

NAOMI

Oh, our motives are strictly humanitarian, I assure you.

MARY

Oh, I'm sure they are.

NAOMI

Because, after all, the best way to get in touch with yourself is to get in touch with other people.

MARY

Oh, that's good. I like that. I really do.

NAOMI

And if there's anything else we can do?

MARY

Oh, no -- you've been a tremendous help just doing whatever it is you did. I mean, thank you. And goodbye. (SHE HANGS UP)

(MORE)



MARY (CONT'D)

She listened. Well, she said it was the same thing as helping. And I do feel more... unwound. Even if Tom does still think I'm the lowest of the low -- he has cause -- and there must be light at the end of the tunnel of my marriage, even if I can't see it.

HEATHER

(ENTERING) What's going on? You're talking to yourself?

MARY

What happened to the Bionic Woman?

HEATHER

She's being repaired.

MARY

Oh.

HEATHER

(GETTING A COKE) You were muttering.

MARY

Well, I have a problem, Heather, and I was just trying to figure a way out of it.

HEATHER

Did you?

MARY

That's a good question.

HEATHER

Do you have a good answer?

MARY

Yes. I know that somewhere locked  
inside me I have a terrific answer. I  
just need someone to help me find out  
what I did with it.

FADE OUT.



ACT TWOMcCULLOUGH DEN, LATER

TOM SLOSHING DOWN (NOT TOO  
SLOPPILY SCHLITZ AND BOURBON  
BOILERMAKERS.

ED

You better watch that.

TOM

I got it under control. Found the right  
beer. Also treated myself to a good  
bourbon for a change. Want one?

ED

No, thanks. I'll just stick to my  
Schlitz.

TOM

The secret is making sure the beer is  
really chilled so you get little ice  
crystals under the cap.

ED

What's eating you?

TOM

Who said anything's eating me? Just the  
union. We've got all this evidence,  
and you know what the guys on the line  
are starting to say?

ED

They're getting bored.

TOM

Yeah... fed up with the investigation  
like it was some TV show that didn't have  
enough action in it.

ED

What else?

TOM

What else what? Nothing.

ED

Come on, don't be some dumb-jerk stoic.

TOM

Let it all hang out?

ED

Right.

TOM

Okay, I had a... problem with Mary.

ED

Louder.

TOM

(MUCH LOUDER) I had a fight with Mary.

ED

Feel better?

TOM

Yeah.

ED

Was that that set-up dinner at the  
Haggers?



TOM

How did you know it was a set-up?

ED

Because I've been on the wrong end of a couple of those myself. People doing you a favor throwing you together with someone you don't want to get thrown together with.

TOM

No, it wasn't that. It was...

ED

What?

TOM

I mean it wasn't someone I didn't want to get thrown together with.

ED

(POURS) Here, have some more bourbon.

TOM

You trying to loosen me up?

ED

If you're gonna get drunk, you might as well get the full benefit of it.

TOM

It's just what I found out before the dinner that knocked me for a...

ED

What?

TOM

(SHAKING HIS HEAD) I can't.

ED

Look, you're staying in my house, you're eating my food -- haven't I got the right to call you a friend and find out what's goin' wrong for you? Maybe I can help.

TOM

(A BEAT -- THEN HE SHRUGS) Okay -- I caught her with another guy. Well, I didn't, but I got the news from our family doctor, so it must have happened.

ED

In a motel room or someplace?

TOM

The Cardiac Care Unit of Fernwood Receiving.

BETTY

(PEEKING IN) Hi, I don't mean to disturb you boys, but I think you should have something to eat.

TOM

I'm afraid I don't have much of a stomach for anything.

BETTY

But that's not good, just sitting in here, drinking... Ed?

ED

Yeah, I'm hungry.

BETTY

(TO TOM) And you couldn't have had anything over at Charlie and Loretta's, not that I mean to pry, but you weren't there long enough for that. You barely had time to say hello... or whatever.

ED

You're prying.

BETTY

I am not.

TOM

It's okay. (MOVING OUT OF THE ROOM WITH HIS DRINK) I guess I'll just have to learn to live with the facts of life -- like when the Tom's away --

BETTY

You don't think he's jealous of Mary and Howard, do you?

ED

Of who?

HOWARD

(COMING IN) Did someone call me?

(KISSING BETTY)

BETTY

We were just worrying about Tom.

ED

Your mother was worrying. I was trying to help the poor guy. Also wondering what was keeping you?



HOWARD

I was job hunting. (GETS A BEER)

ED

(CHECKING WATCH) At eight fifteen?

HOWARD

Okay, so I stopped in at a bar.

BETTY

A bar? Why? We have everything anybody could possibly want right here. Was it the Capri Lounge?

ED

No -- I don't think that's the kind of bar he went to.

HOWARD

Just some little place I found.

BETTY

(MOSTLY TO ED) Now I don't want you two even talking about that sort of thing.

ED

Then tell him not to go sneaking out.

HOWARD

I wasn't sneaking. I was having a beer. And I wish you wouldn't treat me like some damn wandering wife.

ED

Maybe if we were married, I wouldn't have to worry about it. (WALKING OUT OF THE ROOM, BETTY AND HOWARD LOOKING AT EACH OTHER.)

FADE OUT.

ACT THREESHUMWAY KITCHEN, MORNING

MARTHA DITZING HER WAY THROUGH  
SERVING BREAKFAST, WHILE GEORGE  
EATS.

MARTHA

George, do you realize this is the first  
time I've burnt the French Toast in  
fifteen years?

GEORGE

Oh, it isn't burnt, Martha... just a little  
black around the edges.

MARTHA

And do you know why?

GEORGE

Actually with this imitation maple syrup  
with imitation butter added, it's all right.

MARTHA

Because last night there was a disaster  
in this family! And I just can't handle  
disasters the way I used to.

GEORGE

You didn't faint, so it can't be too bad.  
I wonder what ever happened to real  
maple?

MARTHA

How can you say it wasn't a disaster?  
Loretta called me herself. And Loretta  
wouldn't talk about Mary behind her back  
unless it was a tragedy, a real tragedy.  
And now I can't get Mary on the phone, her  
line's busy -- of course, I could go  
over, but I don't want to barge in,  
because if Mary's on the phone, that  
must mean she's talking to somebody and  
probably doesn't want to be disturbed.

GEORGE

Martha, sit down, please. And eat your  
breakfast.

MARTHA

(SITS, BUT DOESN'T EAT) Also, Cathy's  
still moping, moping, moping! I mean,  
honestly, George, it has been a whole  
week since her engagement to Dennis broke  
off. A week! Normally in that time she'd  
have found at least four other boys. Oh,  
what am I saying? I don't want her  
running around! On top of which Elwood's  
dying.

GEORGE

Elwood?

MARTHA

My podicarpus with the droopy leaves.



GEORGE

You mean, you're naming them now?

MARTHA

Of course, she has met one boy. Man.

But he's a priest...

GEORGE

Martha, I swear... (GETTING UP) I don't know how you'd get through the day if you didn't have two daughters to worry about.

MARTHA

(THROWING IT BACK) And I don't know how you'd get through yours if you didn't have your union to grumble about.

GEORGE

Have I grumbled once?

MARTHA

No, but only because you haven't had a chance with me monopolizing the conversation a mile a minute.

GEORGE

(A KISS) I'll be late.

MARTHA

(SAMPLING THE FRENCH TOAST) It tastes maply to me.

GEORGE

Maply, but not maple. (ON HIS WAY OUT THE DOOR, COLLIDING WITH BETTY ABOUT TO KNOCK)

BETTY

Oh, hi --

GEORGE

Betty.

BETTY

I was just knocking.

MARTHA

Come on in. We have to talk.

GEORGE

(EYEBROW ARCHED) Don't work too hard.

(HE'S GONE)

BETTY

You know, he's cute.

MARTHA

Yeah... especially in Milwaukee.

CATHY

(COMING IN) What's burning?

MARTHA

French toast, but it's not burning --  
it's just a little black around the  
edges.

CATHY

Hi, Mrs. McCullough.

MARTHA

Also, there's some lovely fresh canned  
kadota figs in the ice box.

CATHY

I don't like figs.

MARTHA

Nobody does, but they always look so good on the label.

BETTY

(HALF SOTTO VOCE) I wanted to talk about Tom.

MARTHA

And Mary, I know. Loretta called me, and since Tom's staying with you --

BETTY

Also Howard was on the phone with Mary this morning -- I was just wondering, you know, if maybe there wasn't something we could do as mothers, just to make our children happier?

MARTHA

Oh, that's it, of course! -- we'll do something.

CATHY

(GETTING A PLATE OF FOOD TO THE TABLE)  
Mother, don't meddle, please -- you're not good at it.

MARTHA

We wouldn't be meddling.

BETTY

Of course not.



CATHY

Well, in your case it wouldn't be  
meddling because you're guided by the  
stars and all, but you just don't know  
my mother --

MARTHA

Cathy, that isn't fair.

SFX: THE PHONE RINGING

CATHY

(ANSWERING) Hello?

TWO-WAY: LIMBO

CLETE

Hi. Cathy Shumway?

CATHY

Yeah. Who is this?

CLETE

Clete Meizenheimer.

CATHY

You're kidding, you mean from television?

MARTHA

Who is it?

CLETE

Yeah, didn't Father Demarco tell you I  
was going to call?

CATHY

Well, he mentioned it, but, I mean,  
television -- I mean, you just don't  
really think about that.

MARTHA

Who is it?

CLETE

He said I'd be doing myself a favor, and  
you a favor too.

CATHY

Well, that's really nice -- I mean,  
he's just so nice.

CLETE

Are you interested in getting together  
with me?

CATHY

Well, sure --

CLETE

To talk about TV, that is.

CATHY

Of course.

CLETE

Because you see the thing is we don't  
normally call people. Those of us on  
television I mean, people usually call us.

CATHY

Well, I guess, Frank figured I was shy.

MARTHA

(SOTTO VOCE, WITH AN ELBOW) Oh, Cathy,  
that's terrible -- you shouldn't lie about  
a priest.

FADE OUT.

ACT FOURMOTEL ROOM, LATER

MERLE, LORETTA, AND JIMMY JOE

MERLE

I'm sorry about bringin' you here, Loretta.

JIMMY JOE

Yeah -- especially seein' as how this room don't even have no TV.

LORETTA

That's okay, Jimmy Joe.

MERLE

(WITH A LOOK TO THE KID) But the thing is, this week, with this temporary cash problem the Crusade's got, we just couldn't book us no church space or tent space or TV studio space to rehearse the Hundred Voice Holy Light Choir -- and I do apologize for that.

LORETTA

I'm sure it's just a momentary set-back.

MERLE

And I also want to thank you for comin' down to help Jimmy Joe with these original tunes he's gonna sing before his sermon.



LORETTA

Well, I just want you to know I'm proud  
and willin' to do anything I can to help.

JIMMY JOE

I'm finished with my school work. Can I  
go out and play?

MERLE

Now you know you can't do that 'til you  
finish memorizing your piece of the  
destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

LORETTA

Memorizin'?

JIMMY

I wanna play ball.

MERLE

You hush up.

LORETTA

I thought Jimmy Joe just said them things  
outa the top of his own head?

MERLE

Well, he does, he does. Why, he'll be  
polishin' his shoes or readin' from  
Deuteronomy -- I help him with the big  
words -- when outa the blue like a bolt  
of lightning, a thought or an inspiration'll  
come to him and he'll start preachin', like  
right here in this motel room! Only it's  
hard for him to remember all his inspired  
thoughts later on, so I have to write 'em  
down for him.

JIMMY JOE

(PLAYING FOR POINTS) That's why I have  
to work on my memorizin'.

LORETTA

I just hope that someday I'll be around  
when you get one of your inspired thoughts  
fron on high.

MERLE

I'm sure you will.

LORETTA

Does the room light up? Or are there  
heavenly voices?

MERLE

Just yours.

JIMMY JOE

Both Dad and me really love the way you  
can wrap your vocal chords around a hymn.  
That's what Dad was sayin'.

LORETTA

Why, ain't that sweet!

MERLE

Hey, I got an idea. (TO LORETTA) Before  
you teach Jimmy Joe more of his music for  
when we hit the road again -- I really  
think it's gonna help to have more show  
biz in his Revival -- I was wonderin' if  
you'd do us Jeeter men the honor of  
gracin' our dinner table? Like at the  
House of Pancakes?

LORETTA

Oh, I'd love to, and I'm just real terrible flattered you'd even ask me, but I can't leave Charlie alone for supper.

JIMMY JOE

You could call him.

LORETTA

Oh, I know, but I'm afraid there really ain't too much in the fridge --

MERLE

He could run out to Colonel Sanders.

LORETTA

But how would he know I wasn't comin' home?

MERLE

There's a phone at the Pancake House.

JIMMY JOE

Come on, please.

LORETTA

Well, as I say, I'd love to. But Charlie doesn't really understand about my missionary work in the first place --

MERLE

Jimmy Joe, why don't you just say a prayer for Brother Hagers to help him understand?



JIMMY JOE

(DROPS TO HIS KNEES) Dear Lord, make that bald-headed man your servant. Make him understand that sometimes your work has to be done at suppertime and in the evenin' hours as well. Amen. (ON HIS FEET)

LORETTA

You think that'll do it?

JIMMY JOE

I know it will.

MERLE

Then we can all be on our way.

LORETTA

Well, if you say so... (PURSE AND COATS GRABBED, MERLE HOLDING THE DOOR OPENED)

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE #100